

THE IBIS.

FOURTH SERIES.

No. IX. JANUARY 1879.

I.—*Contributions to the Ornithology of Siberia.*

By HENRY SEEBOHM.

[Continued from 'The Ibis,' 1877, p. 352.]

AMPELIS GARRULUS, Linn.

On the 14th of June I recognized the note and caught a distant sight of a small flock of about half a dozen Waxwings; but the forest was so much flooded that I was unable to do more than watch the birds through my binocular.

PARUS ATER, Linn.

I did not meet with the Coal-Tit until I reached Yen-e-saisk' on the return journey.

PARUS MAJOR, Linn.

The Great Tit is a winter resident in the whole of South Siberia; and at various villages on the journey as far north as Yen-e-saisk' it was frequently seen. I did not observe it further north.

PARUS PALUSTRIS, Linn., subsp. *camtschatkensis*, Bon.

The only time that I met with a Marsh-Tit was on the 12th May. I only saw one pair, in company with a small party of Lapp Tits. They certainly belong to the north-eastern form, with grey rather than brown backs, and with

the black on the head extending far down the back. I cannot distinguish a Yen-e-say' skin from others from Irkutsk and Archangel. It seems to me impossible to allow specific rank to the arctic and subarctic forms of *P. palustris*, and I think they ought to figure as subspecies only—*P. palustris*, subspecies *borealis*, and *P. palustris*, subspecies *camtschatkensis*.

PARUS CINCTUS, Bodd., subsp. *grisescens*, Sharpe et Dresser.

I found the Lapp Tit tolerably common in the forests on our arrival on the Arctic circle. It was seldom that I made a round on snow-shoes in the forest without falling in with a small flock of these birds. I did not, however, observe them further north. I brought home a very large series. They agree with skins from Lake Baical in being much less rusty on the flanks than specimens from Europe usually are. They vary considerably *inter se*; and it would be easy to make a series from the Norwegian bird, through Archangel and Petchora skins, to the extreme Siberian form. My Yen-e-say' skins certainly belong to the *Parus grisescens* of Sharpe and Dresser; but the authors of that title would now, I believe, scarcely claim specific rank for the bird they described.

TURDUS PILARIS, Linn.

The Fieldfare arrived at the Arctic circle on the 8th of June, and soon became very abundant. I took several nests with eggs during the first week in July. It seemed to be generally distributed over the country, breeding alone or in small parties, and not in the large colonies which are so frequently met with in Norway. The call-note of this bird, a loose *tsik-tsak*, was almost constantly to be heard; but the song seemed to be confined to the pairing-season. It is a low and not particularly melodious warble, and is generally commenced when the bird is on the wing. The last nest of the Fieldfare which I found was in lat. 69°, on the tundra. Here the bird was breeding on the ground under the edge of a cliff, in a situation such as a Ring-Ouzel might have chosen. I did not see the Fieldfare further north than lat. 70½°; but I shot them as far south as Yen-e-saisk', in lat. 58°.

where they appeared to have been breeding, as it was only the middle of August.

Turdus iliacus, Linn.

I shot the first Redwing on the 5th of June. It appears to arrive earlier than the Fieldfare, and to go further north. On the Arctic circle it built its nest in the willows and birches, but generally nearer the ground than the Fieldfare usually does. In lat. 71° the Redwing was still common and breeding on the ground, generally on a sloping bank. I did not see it further north.

Turdus dubius, Bechst.

The first Thrush to arrive at the Arctic circle was this species—the Dusky Thrush (*T. fuscatus* of Pallas). Small parties of it arrived on the 4th of June, and were to be found feeding on the steep banks where the sun had melted the snow. Their call-note reminded me of that of the Redwing. During the next week they were very plentiful, and I began anxiously to look out for their nests; but within a fortnight after their arrival they had all disappeared, and I saw no more of them until the 12th of July, during our voyage down the river. On this day we cast anchor for a few hours in lat. 69° , and I went on shore to explore for the first time a Siberian tundra. I climbed up the steep bank, and found myself in a wild desolate-looking country, full of lakes, swamps, and rivers, in some places a dead flat, in others undulating, and even hilly, brilliant with gay flowers, swarming with mosquitoes, and full of birds. In sheltered places dwarf willows and creeping-birches were growing, and (because we were only some fifty versts from the forests) here and there a few stunted larches. Winding through the tundra was the bed of a river, now nothing but a small deep valley, forming a chain of isolated lakes and pools. This river-bed bears the name of the dried-up Doo-din'-ka, and is about fifty versts to the north-west of the real river Doo-din'-ka. On some of the northern slopes large patches of snow were still lying. Most of the birds evidently had young. I found myself generally the centre of attraction of a little crowd of birds

uttering their various alarm-notes as they flew round or waited on some shrub or plant with their bills full of mosquitoes, anxious to feed their young as soon as I was out of their way. As I was returning to the shore, and descending a steep sloping bank covered with patches of dwarf birch and willow, overlooking a flat willow-swamp which evidently once formed a little delta at the mouth of the dried-up Doo-din'-ka, my attention was attracted by a pair of Dusky Thrushes loudly proclaiming the vicinity of their nest. I shot one of them, and, after a diligent search of half an hour, found the nest in the fork of a willow bush level with the ground. It was exactly like the nest of a Fieldfare, lined with dried grass, and contained, alas! five young birds about a week old.

At noon we weighed anchor; but at midnight it was blowing such a stiff gale that we were afraid to round the "broad nose" of Tol-stan-os' in the 'Ibis;' so we cast anchor under the lee of the mud cliffs of the Yen-e-say', and I again went on shore. In some places the cliffs were very steep, and were naked mud or clay. In others the slope was more gradual, and was covered with mud and alder bushes. Among these bushes I found the Dusky Thrush again breeding, but was only able to find one nest with five nearly fledged young. The nest was placed, as before, in the fork of a willow, level with the ground. This was the last time that I saw this species of Thrush.

There is considerable variation in the colour of the skins of this species which I brought from the Yen-e-say', especially in the amount of black on the breast and red on the upper plumage. Some specimens have more or less rufous on the tail-feathers, approaching *T. naumanni*. One male in particular has scarcely any red tinge in the plumage, and has even grey instead of chestnut axillaries. The young in nestling plumage differ from the young of *T. pilaris*, *T. iliacus*, *T. obscurus*, and *T. atrigularis*, in having more buff on the wing and less buff on the breast.

TURDUS OBSCURUS, Gm.

During the first week of June the forests were practically

impassable. The deep snow was in process of melting, and too soft to bear the weight even when distributed over a pair of snow-shoes each measuring 4 feet 6 inches long and 10 inches wide. On some of the steeper slopes exposed to the south small oases of bare ground were to be found. One of these, close behind my quarters, thinly covered over with bushes, was a very prolific hunting-ground for me during the spring migration. On this piece of ground, on the 7th of June, I had the pleasure of shooting my first brace of Dark Thrushes (the *Turdus pallens* of Pallas, but not the *Turdus pallidus* of Gmelin). A couple of days afterwards I shot two more on the same ground. As soon as the forests were passable I made daily rambles, and almost always heard the song of this bird. *Turdus dubius* had gone further north to breed; but this species was evidently stopping and making preparations to build its nest. This Thrush is a very poor songster, but he has a splendid voice. He warbles two or three clear rich notes, as mellow as those of a blackbird. He stops; his song is finished; and you hear no more for a minute, when the same brilliant prelude is repeated. On the 27th of June I had the good luck to take the nest of this bird. It was placed upon a horizontal branch of a somewhat slender spruce, about fifteen feet from the ground. The female flew off as I approached the tree. I shot her, and soon had the nest with five eggs in my hand. The nest is carefully made, neatly lined with mud and afterwards with dry grass. The eggs resemble small but richly marked Blackbird's eggs. I did not meet with this interesting Thrush further north than the Arctic circle; but on my return journey, in lat. 66°, on the 3rd of August (and afterwards in lat 63°, on the 6th of August), I shot the young in first plumage, with spotted backs and spotted breasts. One of these skins will be figured in Dresser's 'Birds of Europe.'

TURDUS SIBIRICUS, Pallas.

Whilst the remains of the ice were still straggling down the Yen-e-say' I occasionally caught a hasty glance at a dark-coloured Thrush with a very conspicuous white eyebrow;

but I did not succeed in shooting one until the 19th of June. It was feeding amongst the dead leaves on the ground in a dense birch plantation. It proved to be a fine male in adult plumage. I made the following memorandum of the colours of the soft parts:—"Bill black. Iris dark hazel. Pupil blue-black. Legs very light brown, yellower at the back of the tarsus and on the soles of the feet." In lat. 68° my companion assured me that he saw one of these very handsome birds on the wing; but I did not observe it myself after we left the Koo-ray'-i-ka, nor did I observe it at all on the return journey. It seems to be a very shy and wary bird, and it is evidently a very rare Thrush in the valley of the Yen-e-say'. Middendorff does not mention it; but I heard of it from a Polish exile at Toor-o-kansk' as the *Chor'-noi drohzd*, or Black Thrush.

TURDUS ATRIGULARIS, TENIM.

I did not meet with the Black-throated Thrush until the 6th of August, in lat. 63°, when I shot two birds in first plumage, which puzzled me. Two days later, in lat. 61½°, I secured a third young bird, and was fortunate enough to obtain the adult female also. The chestnut colour of the wing-lining and axillaries of the young of this species serve to distinguish it from the young of *T. pilaris* and *T. obscurus*. In the young of *T. iliacus* the chestnut of the wing-lining and axillaries is much deeper in colour, and extends onto the flanks, whilst it is scarcely perceptible on the under tail-coverts.

RUTICILLA PHÆNICURUS (Linn.).

My sole authority for including the Common Redstart among the birds of the Yen-e-say' is a fine skin of a young Redstart in first plumage, which I shot on the 3rd of August in lat. 66°. The plumage of this skin agrees exactly with that of the young in first plumage of our bird; and since it was found by Harvie Brown and myself in the valley of the Petchora in about the same latitude, I see no reason for suspecting my Yen-e-say' bird to be the young of any other allied species, though it has not hitherto been recorded from so far east.

CYANECULA SUECICA (Linn.).

I found the Blue-throated Warbler very common in the valley of the Yen-e-say'. It was amongst the earliest insect-eating birds to arrive at our winter-quarters. I shot several on the 5th of June. For a week or two they were very common; but as the snow on the tundra melted they gradually left us, only a few remaining to breed. I lost sight of the Blue-throat in lat. 71°.

NEMURA CYANURA (Pall.).

Curiously enough the first Warbler I shot on the Yen-e-say' was the Blue-rumped Warbler. It was, of course, only an accidental straggler, who had strayed away from his companions and reached the Arctic circle before his time. It was the 21st of May, a bitterly cold day, no sunshine, a sou'-west wind, but nevertheless a keen frost. I did not turn out in the morning; but in the afternoon I put on my snow-shoes and had a round through the forest. There was hardly a bird to be seen; but as I was returning to the ship I caught sight of a little bird flitting about from tree to tree, apparently seeking insects on the trunks below the level of the surface of the snow in the hollows round the stems, caused by the heat of the sun absorbed by their dark surfaces. It gave me a long chase, flying rapidly, but never rising higher than three or four feet above the level of the snow. At last I got a long shot at it. It was alive when I secured it; and I remarked its brilliant, large, pale, blood-red eye. The legs were brown, and the bill nearly black. I shot a second example on the 14th of June; it was busily engaged in searching for insects, principally at the roots of trees. This was all I saw of this bird. Both my birds are males, but not in the fine metallic blue plumage which old birds attain. I was probably at the extreme limit of this bird's northern range.

CALLIOPE CAMTCHATKENSIS (Gmel.).

I only met with this very handsome bird once within the Arctic circle. This was on the 14th of June, whilst the ice was still straggling down the river. Early in the morning, before breakfast, Blue-throats were singing lustily. One bird

struck me as having a wonderfully fine song, richer and more melodious than that of the Blue-throat, and scarcely inferior to that of a Nightingale. I shot him to be quite sure that he was only a Blue-throat, and was astonished to pick up a fine male Ruby-throated Warbler. I did not meet with this bird again until I reached Yen-e-saisk' on my return journey. It was then the 16th of August, and I was exploring the reedy swamps near the river. My attention was attracted to a bird hidden among the *Carices*, which was uttering a very loud harsh cry, like *tic, tic, tic*. After waiting some time I got a shot at it in a tall bunch of rushes. I felt quite sure that the bird was a large *Acrocephalus*, and was astonished to find a second male Ruby-throat.

SAXICOLA CENANTHE (Linn.).

The Wheatear arrived at our winter quarters on the 3rd of June, and was common as far north as we went.

PRATINCOLA INDICA, Blyth.

The Indian form of the Stonechat, with pure white unspotted rump and nearly black axillaries, was rare. I noticed it first on the 11th of June on the Arctic circle, and afterwards in lat. 67°.

SYLVIA CURRUCA, Linn., subspecies *affinis*, Blyth.

I first noticed the Lesser Whitethroat on the 8th of June, and did not observe it further north than lat. 67°. In 'Stray Feathers,' iii. p. 372, Mr. Brooks endeavours to show that the Indian bird differs from ours. Of the six differences which he there points out I cannot detect any but the first. There is no doubt that in the eastern bird the wing is generally somewhat more rounded than in the western form; but whether this is sufficient to entitle the two forms to specific rank I feel considerable doubt. In ten skins from England, Norway, Heligoland, Russia, Turkey, and Asia Minor, the second primary is decidedly longer than the sixth. In one skin from India and one from the Yen-e-say' this is also the case. In five skins from India and five skins from the Yen-e-say' the second primary is shorter than the sixth, but longer than the seventh; and in one skin from Cawnpore and one from Be-

loochistan the second primary is shorter than the seventh, but longer than the eighth. More evidence must, I think, be collected before we admit *S. affinis* even to be a satisfactory subspecies.

PHYLLOSCOPUS BOREALIS (Blasius).

A fortnight after the arrival of *Phylloscopus trochilus*, *P. tristis*, and *P. superciliosus* I had given up *P. borealis* in despair, when suddenly it arrived in great numbers, and became the commonest of the four species. The song is almost exactly like the trill of the Redpole, but not quite so rapid, and a little more melodious. Its call-note is generally a single monotonous *dzit*, but sometimes made into a double note by dwelling on the first part, *d—z, zit*. It is less restless than the other Willow-Warblers, by no means shy, and is easy to shoot. When I left the Arctic circle it had probably not commenced to breed; but on the 6th of July I had the good fortune to shoot a bird from its nest at Egaska, in lat. 67°. The eggs are larger than those of our Willow-Warbler's, pure white, and profusely spotted all over with very small and very pale pink spots. They were five in number. The nest was built on the ground in a wood thinly scattered with trees, and was placed in a recess on the side of a tussock or little mound of grass and other plants. It was semidomed, the outside being composed of moss, and the inside of fine dry grass. There was neither feather nor hair used in the construction. I did not see this bird further north than lat. 69°.

PHYLLOSCOPUS TROCHILUS (Linn.).

"*Sylvia icterina*, Vieill.", Eversm. (nec Vieill.), Add. ad Pall. Zoogr. Rosso-As. fasc. iii. p. 14 (1842).

Phyllopneuste eversmani, Bp. Consp. Gen. Avium, p. 289 (1850).

It was with very great pleasure that I heard the familiar song of this European bird on the 4th of June on the Arctic circle, in the valley of the Yen-e-say', so much further east than it has hitherto been recorded. I afterwards found it common extending as far northwards as lat. 70°. As this bird has never been found in India, it would seem probable that

the Yen-e-say' Willow-Warblers winter in Persia, whence Blanford records them.

In the St.-Petersburg Museum I had an opportunity of examining the type of Eversmann's *Sylvia icterina*, which was afterwards rechristened by Bonaparte *Phyllopneuste eversmanni*. I found it to be a typical specimen of *Phylloscopus trochilus*.

PHYLLOSCOPUS TRISTIS, Blyth.

The Siberian Chiffchaff arrived on the Arctic circle on the 4th of June, and was a common bird there until we left. Even before the snow was melted in the forests its cheerful *chivit'-chivet'* was constantly to be heard. When feeding it is a most restless bird, seeming always to be in a hurry, as if its object were to cover as much ground as possible. Later on in the season it was much less difficult to shoot. Although it arrives so early, it appears to be a late breeder. The first nest I found was on the 2nd of July in lat. 67°. We were taking in ballast after our second narrow escape from shipwreck. I went on shore for a few hour's shooting. Alongside the ship, on a grassy part of the river-bank, there were three Ost'-yak chooms, with a herd of about fifty reindeer. Fifty yards above this encampment the shore was very muddy, and between the river and the forest was a long gently sloping bank sprinkled over with willows. In these trees wisps of dry grass were hanging, caught between the forks of the branches, and left there after the high water had subsided. In one of these, about two feet from the ground, a Siberian Chiffchaff had built its nest, or rather it had appropriated one of them for its nest. There was scarcely any attempt at interlacing stalks. It was undoubtedly the most slovenly and the most loosely constructed nest I remember to have seen. It was scarcely more than a hole, about two and a half inches in diameter, with one side a little higher than the other. The entrance was somewhat smaller than the greatest size inside, which was very globular and carefully lined with Caper-calsie and Willow-Grouse feathers, plenty of which would naturally be found so near to an Ost'-yak choom. I shot

the bird from the nest, which contained three eggs. My next nest of this bird was taken on the 14th of July, and contained four eggs. It was placed in the branches of an alder-bush, about four feet from the ground, and within twenty yards of the water's edge. It was rather more carefully constructed than the one I previously found, and composed of dry grass, semidomed, and lined with Willow-Grouse feathers. The third nest I took on the island of Mah'-la Brek'-off-sky, about lat. $70\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. This nest was similar in construction to the others, but was placed in the rank herbage within a few inches of the ground. The eggs in this and a fourth nest which I took the same day (July 15th), were somewhat incubated. The Siberian Chiffchaff lays a bold round egg, large for the size of the bird, pure white, spotted with dark purple-red, almost black. Sometimes the spots are of considerable size. I have no hesitation in saying that the eggs which Harvie-Brown and I brought from the Petchora, which we supposed to be eggs of this bird, were only unusually small varieties of those of the common Willow-Warbler.

I did not meet with the Siberian Chiffchaff further north than $70\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$; but on the return journey I continually met with it as far south as Yen-e-saisk'. On these occasions it was carefully tending its newly fledged young. Its plaintive monosyllabic call-note was then often heard; but it appeared to have dropped the *chivit' chivet'*.

PHYLLOSCOPUS FUSCATUS, Blyth.

On my return journey I spent a few days in the middle of August at Yen-e-saisk', devoting some time to the exploration of the banks of the Yen-e-say'. The country was almost flat, and for miles I wandered across an extent of meadowland which had recently been cut for hay. This meadowland is intersected with numerous half-dried-up river-beds running parallel to the Yen-e-say'. These river-beds are full of tall *Carices* and various water-plants, and are almost concealed by willow trees. Occasionally the water is open. One of the commonest birds in these swamps was *Phylloscopus fuscatus*; what we saw were mostly young birds not fully fledged.

PHYLLOSCOPUS SUPERCILIOSUS (Gmel.).

On the 4th of June, while the ill-fated 'Thames' was in the agonies of its first shipwreck, I was delighted to have my attention called away by the note of this interesting bird, which I recognized at once as the same which I had heard in Gaetke's garden on Heligoland the year before. It is very fairly represented by the word *weest*. The bird soon became very common, frequenting almost exclusively the pine-forests on the banks of the Koo-ray'-i-ka and the Yen-e-say'. It was not particularly shy; and on more than one occasion I watched it for some time at a distance of only a few feet. On one occasion only I heard it make any attempt at a song; this was on the 21st of June. The bird was perched upon the extreme summit of a spruce, and stood shivering its wings, uttering a few plaintive notes, most of them poor and feeble variations on its call-note. On the 26th of June I was fortunate enough to find its nest. Curiously enough I was this time also in company with a Heligolander, Mr. Boiling, the ship-builder of Yen-e-saisk'. Late in the evening we were strolling through the forest between the Koo-ray'-i-ka and the Yen-e-say'. As we were walking along a little bird started up near us, and began most persistently to utter the well-known cry of the Yellow-browed Warbler. As it kept flying around us from tree to tree, we naturally came to the conclusion that it had a nest near. We searched for some time unsuccessfully, and then retired to a short distance, and sat down upon a tree-trunk to watch. The bird was very uneasy, but continually came back to a birch tree, from which it frequently made short flights towards the ground, as if it was anxious to return to its nest, but dare not whilst we were in sight. This went on for about half an hour, when we came to the conclusion that the nest must be at the foot of the birch tree, and commenced a second search. In less than five minutes I found the nest, with six eggs. It was built in a slight tuft of grass, moss, and bilberries, semidomed, exactly like the nests of our Willow-Warblers. It was composed of dry grass and moss, and lined with reindeer-hair. The eggs were very similar in colour to

those of our Willow-Warbler, but more spotted than usual, and smaller in size. I did not meet with this bird further north than lat. 70° , nor did I see it on the return voyage.

ACROCEPHALUS SCHÆNOBÆNUS (Linn.).

It is rather remarkable that the Sedge-Warbler should have hitherto been overlooked in Siberia. It arrived on the Arctic circle on the 15th of June, and soon became very abundant; but I did not observe it further north than lat. 67° .

ACROCEPHALUS DUMETORUM, Blyth.

I did not meet with this bird until the 8th of August, on my return journey, in lat. 62° , where it was evidently breeding.

LOCUSTELLA CERTHIOLA (Pall.).

As I passed through Yen-e-saish' on my return journey, towards the end of August, I found this rare Grasshopper-Warbler breeding in the swampy thickets near the banks of the river. The young in first plumage from this locality will be described and figured in Dresser's 'Birds of Europe.'

I found it very shy and skulking in its habits. The young birds, some only half fledged, were still in broods; and occasionally I got a shot at one which left the sedges and ventured into the willows. They were calling anxiously to each other, the note being a harsh *tic, tic, tic*.

Authentic skins of this bird in first plumage, now for the first time obtained, are very interesting. They prove that the various skins to be found in collections labelled *L. ochotensis* by Dybowski, from Lake Baikal, are simply the young of *L. certhiola*. The general colour of the underparts of the young in first plumage is buffish yellow, darkest on the breast and flanks, and inclining to chestnut on the under tail-coverts. In first winter plumage this yellow tinge is retained; but it is lost in the spring moult, the general colour of the underparts being then buffish white, darkest on the breast, flanks, and under tail-coverts. A third state of plumage is that of the adult after the autumn moult, in which the buff of the underparts almost approaches chestnut. In this state (gradually becoming duller by abrasion as the winter wears on) it is the

L. rubescens of Blyth. Jerdon seems to have been acquainted with all three states of plumage. The young and adult in summer plumage he describes under the name of *L. certhiola* (Pall.); but doubtful of the identity of the Siberian and Indian birds, he proposes the name of *L. temporalis* for the latter, in case they should afterwards be found to be distinct. The autumn plumage of the adult he describes as *L. rubescens*, Blyth, but alludes to that ornithologist's opinion that it might be identical with Pallas's bird. Salvadori's *Calamodyta doriæ* is *L. certhiola* in winter plumage from Borneo. When I was in Paris l'abbé David told me that the type of *Locustella minor*, David et Oustalet, was lost; but he assured me, what I was already prepared to assert, that it is a bad species, and the name must sink into a synonym of *L. certhiola*. Full references to all these synonyms will appear in Dresser's 'Birds of Europe.'

LOCUSTELLA OCHOTENSIS, Midd.

Sylvia (Locustella) ochotensis, Midd. Sib. Reis. ii. p. 185 (1851). Young in first plumage.

Sylvia (Locustella) certhiola, Midd. Sib. Reis. ii. p. 184 (1851, nec Pall.). Adult.

Locustella japonica, Cassin, Proc. Ac. Sc. Phil. 1858, p. 194. Young.

Locustella subcerthiola, Swinhoe, Ibis, 1874, p. 154. Adult.

Arundinax blakistoni, Swinhoe, Ibis, 1876, p. 332. Young in first winter plumage.

The synonymy of *L. ochotensis* and *L. certhiola* have hitherto been in such hopeless confusion that I am glad to have an opportunity of putting them in something like order. When I was in St. Petersburg the curator of the Museum, with the politeness so characteristic of the Russians, gave me every facility for inspecting types and other interesting skins in the collection. I found that all the skins collected by Middendorff near the shores of the Sea of Ochotsk, labelled respectively *L. certhiola* and *L. ochotensis*, belonged to one species, the former being adult birds, and the latter young in first plumage. The difference between them lay solely in the

general colour of the underparts. This was buffish white in the adult birds, and buffish yellow in the young, precisely the difference which I had found only a few weeks before between the adult and young of the very closely allied *L. certhiola*. None of Middendorff's birds, however, were the true *L. certhiola* of Pallas. The name *L. ochotensis*, Midd., therefore stands for this species, with *L. certhiola*, Pall. apud Midd., as a synonym. Besides Middendorff's type I found a fine series of skins of this bird collected by Wosnessensky in Kamtchatka and the Kurile Islands. This bird differs from *L. certhiola* in having the upper parts plain, like *L. luscinioides*, instead of spotted, like *L. naevia*. Young birds have, however, traces of obscure spots on the head and back. In this state it was described by Cassin as *L. japonica* from Japan. The young in first winter plumage was described by Swinhoe as *Arundinax blakistoni*, from the same locality. One of Wosnessensky's skins from Kamtchatka came into Swinhoe's possession, and was described by him as *L. subcerthiola*. It is that of an adult bird, and agrees exactly with a skin in my collection collected by Wosnessensky on Urup island, one of the Kurile Islands, between Kamtchatka and Japan. In the British Museum is a skin from Labuan, in Borneo, where this species winters.

LOCUSTELLA FASCIOLATA (Gray).

Acrocephalus fasciolatus, Gray, P. Z. S. 1860, p. 349.

Acrocephalus insularis, Wallace, Ibis, 1862, p. 350.

Calamoherpe fumigata, Swinhoe, P. Z. S. 1863, pp. 91, 293.

Calamoherpe subflavescens, Elliot, P. Z. S. 1870, p. 243.

It may at first sight appear a somewhat bold step to take to unite two species hitherto considered so distinct as *A. fasciolatus* and *A. insularis*, and a still bolder one, after having married the two species, to send them to spend their honeymoon in the genus *Locustella*. The fact is that they agree in every particular, except in the colour of the underparts. The difference of colour, however, is exactly what we have just found to be the difference between young and adult plumage in two species of the genus *Locustella*. I have already

given my reasons in the last number of 'The Ibis' for placing this species in that genus. In the Museum at St. Petersburg are two very beautiful skins of adult birds of this species from the Ussuri river. Young birds have been obtained by Dybofsky in Daouria, and have been described by Elliot as *C. subflavescens* from the same locality. Swinhoe described the adult passing through China on migration, as *C. fumigata*, and also recorded it from Japan. Wallace described *A. insularis* from Gilolo and Morty; and Gray described his *A. fasciolatus* from skins collected by Wallace in Batchian, Gilolo, and Morty. I think I may fairly claim that all the known facts of the geographical distribution of these two birds are in favour of my theory that they are young and adult of one species.

ACCENTOR MONTANELLUS (Pall.).

I first noticed this bird on the 19th of June, a quiet skulking bird, rarely seen on the wing, and principally frequenting the willows near the banks of the Yen-e-say'. Four days afterwards I had a long chase on the Koo-ray'-i-ka side of the river after a bird whose song I had frequently heard before. It was a short unpretentious song, something like that of our Hedge-Sparrow. The bird was generally on the top of a high tree, where it sang its short song, and went onto another tree. At last I succeeded in shooting it from the top of a pine, and was astonished to find it the Mountain-Accentor. I did not meet with it again until I reached lat. $70\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, where I found it breeding in the island of Mah'-la Brek'-off-sky. Here it was skulking among the willows, like a Grasshopper-Warbler. The nest was within a foot of the ground; but I was so worried with mosquitoes that I neglected to note the materials of which it was composed. The eggs are blue, like those of our Hedge-Sparrow. I did not meet with it further north.

HIRUNDO RUSTICA, Linn.

On the 16th of May a solitary Barn-Swallow appeared. I did not see another until we were within a hundred miles of Yen-e-saisk' on the return journey. At that town they were common enough.

CHELIDON LAGOPODA (Pall.).

In the 'Proceedings' of the Zoological Society, 1862, p. 320, Swinhoe described a Martin which differs from ours in having the upper tail-coverts white to the tips of the feathers, and the axillaries and wing-lining dark brown. He gave it the name of *C. whitelyi*; but in 'The Ibis,' 1874, p. 152, he pointed out that it is identical with the *Hirundo lagopoda* of Pallas. This bird was the only *Chelidon* which I obtained on the Yen-e-say'. Several pairs arrived on the Arctic circle on the 11th of June, and were soon busy hawking for flies and examining their old nests. In the village of Koo-ray'-i-ka, opposite the mouth of the river of that name, they swarmed in thousands. The nest exactly resembles that of our House-Martin; but the birds seemed to be very capricious in selecting a house where they might trust their young. One house in particular seemed to be the favourite; and here the eaves were crowded with rows of nests, in some places three or four deep. The eggs are, if any thing, larger than those of our bird, but also pure white. I observed this bird up to lat. 69°, where a few pairs were breeding. I could not perceive any difference in the habits or notes of these birds and those of our own species. On the return journey I noticed a colony, doubtless of these birds, which had built their nests against the limestone cliffs of the Kah'-nin Pass, as our bird frequently does in the limestone districts of Yorkshire, the Parnassus, &c. As I passed through Yen-e-saisk' in the middle of August, the House-Martins were swarming on the church-towers, preparing for departure on their autumn migration.

When these Swallows began to make preparations for breeding, the 'Thames' was riding at anchor in the Koo-ray'-i-ka. Some scores of these birds evidently took a great fancy to the ship, and began to build their nests on the sails under the yardarms.

COTYLE RIPARIA, Linn.

The Sand-Martin arrived on the Arctic circle on the 9th of June. Both on the banks of the Ob and the Yen-e-say' large colonies of these birds were frequent. I did not see

any further north than lat. 67°. Siberian birds, like those of North Europe, are somewhat darker brown above and purer white below than our Sand-Martin.

[To be continued.]

II.—*Remarks on Messrs. Blakiston and Pryer's Catalogue of the Birds of Japan.* By HENRY SEEBOHM.

(Plate I.)

THROUGH the kindness of the Editors of 'The Ibis' two small collections of birds from Japan have been placed in my hands for examination. The first collection contains 38 skins, sent by Mr. Blakiston from Hakodate for identification, to which Mr. Pryer has added 12 skins at Yokohama.

The second collection contains 64 skins, and is the result of a visit paid by Mr. Heywood Jones to the village of Shimbashiri, about 2000 feet above the level of the sea, on the volcanic mountain of Fusi-yama, near Yokohama.

The numbers and the names in the subjoined remarks are those used in the 'Catalogue of the Birds of Japan,' by Messrs. Blakiston and Pryer, published in 'The Ibis' of last year (pp. 209-250).

The birds of Japan possess a special interest to the British ornithologist. These islands occupy a somewhat analogous position on the east of the mainland of the Palæarctic region to our own islands on the west of the same great zoological district. Similar facts of geographical situation appear to have produced similar results in the two groups of islands, namely the presence of insular forms differing too slightly from the continental types to admit them to specific distinction. In order that these interesting facts should not be lost sight of, I have been obliged to admit the use of sub-specific names. It is the boast of British ornithologists that their system of nomenclature is binomial. When Linnæus substituted a word instead of a sentence to designate a species, he made an immense stride towards simplicity of nomenclature. The practice of Brisson and the earlier ornitholo-